

**Chair H. Morgan Griffith**  
**House Energy and Commerce Committee**  
**Oversight & Investigations Hearing**  
**“Antimicrobial Resistance: Examining an Emerging Public**  
**Health Threat.”**  
**April 28, 2023**

Welcome everyone to what I hope will be a productive, fact-finding hearing on a subject I have long been interested in – Antimicrobial Resistance, or AMR.

We heard in yesterday’s hearing that the risk of a pathogen escaping from a lab and causing a pandemic is very real. Just as real is the threat posed by antimicrobial resistant pathogens.

Ever since the discovery of penicillin, antibiotics have been developed to treat previously untreatable infections – and they truly are life savers.

The problem is, over time, the pathogens become resistant to the antibiotics, and if a new way to kill the pathogen is not found, the patient will succumb to the pathogen.

As it stands right now, antibiotic resistance infections can be impossible to treat.

Despite the increased demand, there has been a significant reduction in investment and development of new antimicrobials. According to data, since 1990, 78% of major drug companies

have cut or scaled back antibiotic research due to development challenges.<sup>1</sup>

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, at least 2.8 million people are infected with antibiotic-resistant bacteria in the United States each year, and more than 35,000 people die as a result.<sup>2</sup>

The rise of drug-resistant infections places a heavy burden on our nation's health care system. The CDC suggests that approximately 30% of all antibiotics prescribed in the US are for infections that do not require antibiotics, which amounts to about 47 million antibiotic courses prescribed in these settings each year.<sup>3</sup>

I am curious to hear from our witnesses about potential solutions, including innovative solutions like phage therapy.

I expect we will also hear today from the GAO about deficiencies at Health and Human Services, the agency with the most responsibility for tackling the AMR problem than any other agency.

While there is no silver bullet solution to the problem of AMR, we are committed to exploring potential solutions to address this

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<sup>1</sup> Mary Palmer et al, *The importance of pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics in antimicrobial drug development and their influence on the success of agents developed to combat resistant gram negative pathogens: A review*, *Frontiers in Pharmacology* (Jul. 25, 2022) available from Nat'l Institutes of Health, National Library of Medicine, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9359604/>

<sup>2</sup> Center for Disease Prevention and Control, *About Antimicrobial Resistance*, (Oct. 5, 2022) <https://www.cdc.gov/drugresistance/about.html>

<sup>3</sup> Center for Disease Prevention and Control, *Antimicrobial Resistance Questions and Answers*, (Nov. 15, 2022) <https://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use/community/about/antibiotic-resistance-faqs.html#two>

public health crisis. I want to emphasize that this hearing is not about taking a position on any legislation introduced, but rather to gather information and fact-find.

Our goal is to examine the AMR problem, assess the role of the federal government, and explore potential solutions.

I look forward to hearing and learning from our witnesses today.